

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 07961 160450Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 CIAE-00 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /098 W
-----001770 161149Z /16

R 160412Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1716
INFO SECDEF WASHDC//DSAA-TC
HQ USAF WASHDC/LGF
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J4
CINCPACAS HICKAM ASB HI//XPK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOFORN BANGKOK 7961

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PASS TH
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR P&B (F-16A FOR THAILAND)

REF: BANGKOK 7012

1. THE RTG HAS REQUESTED P&B INFORMATION FOR FMS PURCHASE ON A SQUADRON OF 16 F-16A AIRCRAFT. THE REQUEST INCLUDES AN INITIAL 18 MONTH SPARES PACKAGE, SPARE ENGINES, SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT, MOBILE TRAINING SETS, TRAINING SOR A MINIMUM OF TWO PILOTS AND 24 MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, DELIVERY OPTIONS (BOTH AIR AND SURFACE) AND SUCH OTHER ITEMS WHICH MAY BE RECOMMENDED. INFORMATION CONCERNING DELIVERY TIME IS ALSO REQUESTED.

2. STATED PURPOSE OF THE PURCHASE BY RTG IS AS FOLLOWS:
QTE IN ORDER TO DEFEND OUR AIR SPACE, THE RTAF IS CLOSELY EXAMINING THE NEED TO BUY A SQUADRON OF MODERN AIR SUPERIORITY FIGHTERS TO COUNTER ANY THREAT WHICH WE MAY ENCOUNTER. END QTE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 07961 160450Z

3. THE THAI ALREADY HAVE PURCHASED A SQUADRON OF F5E/F AIRCRAFT (FMS CASE PEACE ETERNAL) IN SUPPORT OF THIS OBJECTIVE AND HAVE RECENTLY REQUESTED P&B FOR A SECOND SQUADRON. THE THAI FORCE STRUCTURE PLAN CALLS FOR A THIRD FIGHTER SQUADRON IN THE EARLY 1980'S, AND THE REQUEST FOR P&B ON F-16'S APPARENTLY IS IN FULFILLMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE.

4. ALTHOUGH THE RTAF APPEARS WELL SATISFIED WITH THEIR F5'S, THERE IS GROWING CONCERN OVER THE CAPABILITY OF THE AIRCRAFT TO COUNTER THE FORCE OF MIG-21 AIRCRAFT NOW OPERATING IN LAOS AND THE POTENTIALLY LARGER THREAT (AS THE THAI SEE IT) OF THE SRV MIG FORCE.

5. THE HIGH ACQUISITION COST OF THIS SYSTEM (GREATER THAN US DOLS 200 MILLION) WILL VERY PROBABLY DETER THE THAI FROM A PURCHASE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE FOLLOWING ALSO WOULD DICTATE DISAPPROVAL OF SUCH A SALE:

A. THE AIRCRAFT REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN TECHNOLOGY WHICH FAR EXCEEDS THE CAPABILITY OF THE THAI TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE WITHOUT U.S. PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE.

B. THE AIRCRAFT IS SIGNIFICANTLY SUPERIOR TO ANY OTHER FIGHTER AIRCRAFT IN NON-US HANDS IN THIS AREA AND COULD BE DESTABILIZING IN SENSE IT WOULD LEAD TO SIMILAR REQUESTS TO PURCHASE BY OTHER COUNTRIES.

C. THE COST OF ACQUISITION AND OPERATION WOULD REPRESENT A DISTINCT DRAIN ON THE LIMITED THAI DEFENSE BUDGET. NO RPT NO INFORMATION IS PRESENTLY AVAILABLE CONCERNING THAI FINANCING PLANS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 07961 160450Z

D. ACQUISITION OF SUCH A SMALL NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE THAI COMBAT CAPABILITY NOR PROVIDE IT WITH AN INCREASE IN AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY, OTHER THAN IN LOCAL POINTS.

6. WE COULD NOT RPT NOT RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF SALE OF F-16'S TO THAILAND, FOR THE REASONS SET FORTH ABOVE. WE WILL THEREFORE DISCOURAGE THE THAI FROM EXPECTING ANY FAVORABLE DECISION ON SALE OF THE F-16'S. AT SAME TIME WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND FAVORABLY AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THEIR REQUEST FOR P&B ON A SECOND SQUADRON OF F-5E'S (REFTEL) IN ORDER TO SHOW RESPONSIVENESS TO THAI CONCERNS. WE APPRECIATE THE LONG-STANDING POLICY OF NOT RPT NOT PROVIDING P&B DATA ON SYSTEMS WHICH WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO SELL TO A GIVEN COUNTRY. HOWEVER, WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE, AS AN EXCEPTIONAL MATTER,

P&B DATA ON THE F-16'S IN THE ANTICIPATION THAT THE HIGH PRICE TAG WOULD FURTHER DISCOURAGE RTG INTEREST IN F-16'S IN NEAR TERM.

WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO07961
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780117-0142
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780357/aaaabwjh.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 33a717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: 78 BANGKOK 7012
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3298188
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR P&B (F-16A FOR THAILAND)
TAGS: MASS, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/33a717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014